

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, WB

SUBJECT: COMMENT ON NEW BERLIN SENAT

REF: USBERLIN 743

1. SUMMARY: IN GENERAL REACTION TO NEW BERLIN SENAT HAS BEEN
CRITICAL. BOTH SPD AND FDP PARTY ORGANS HAVE APPROVED
COALITION ARRANGEMENT BUT NOT WITHOUT COMPLAINTS.
CONSENSUS IS THAT SENAT IS WEAK COMPROMISE ARRANGEMENT
WHICH WILL LIKELY UNDERGO SEVERAL CHANGES OVER COMING
LEGISLATIVE PERIOD. END SUMMARY:

2. CDU HAS PREDICTABLY CRITICIZED FORMATION
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OF NEW BERLIN SENAT (CABINET) BY SPD-FDP COALITION AS

"COALITION OF LOSERS," CONTRARY TO WILL OF VOTERS, WHO HAD MADE CDU STRONGEST PARTY. AMONG EPITHETS USED BY CDU WERE "CABINET OF CRIPPLES" AND "BELATED APRIL FOOL JOKE." PRINCIPAL TARGET OF CRITICISM WAS ECONOMIC SENATOR-DESIGNATE WOLFGANG LUEDER, LEADER OF BERLIN FDP: CDU SPOKESMAN ASKED RHETORICALLY HOW BEING DIVORCE COURT JUDGE QUALIFIED LUEDER TO HEAD IMPORTANT DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS. PRO-CDU BERLINER MORGENPOST EDITOR WALTER BRUECKMANN CONCLUDED A BITTER EDITORIAL WITH RESIGNED STATEMENT THAT IN TIME PEOPLE PROBABLY WILL SAY THAT LUEDER "ISN'T SO BAD AFTER ALL." HOWEVER, MORGENPOST RETURNED TO ATTACK ON APRIL 21 CHARGING THAT LUEDER WAS A RADICAL LEFTIST WHO HELPED BRING FREE UNIVERSITY TO CHAOTIC STATE.

3. LENGTHY MEETING APRIL 16 SPD CAUCUS
APPROVED COALITION WITH FDP 62 TO 1. MANY SPD BACKBENCHERS HAD BEEN IRRITATED BY GOVERNING MAYOR SCHUETZ' FAILURE TO CONSULT WITH ALL ELEMENTS OF CAUCUS, PARTICULARLY OVER HIS DECISION TO AWARD SPD LEFTISTS SECOND SENATORIAL PORTFOLIO. SPD CAUCUS CHAIRMAN HAUS CALLED CRITICISM " CERTAIN AMOUNT OF BELL YACHING" WHILE SCHUETZ REMINDED SPD FAITHFUL HOW LIMITED HIS ROOM FOR NEGOTIATION HAD BEEN. SCHUETZ HIMSELF HAS DESCRIBED COALITION AGREEMENT PUBLICLY AS BEST OBTAINABLE UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES.

4. WITH 63 MEMBERS VOTING, SPD CAUCUS PRODUCED FOLLOWING POSITIVE VOTES FOR NINE SPD CANDIDATES FOR SENATORIAL POSITIONS: STOBBE - FEDERAL AFFAIRS (57); RIEBSCHLAEGER-FINANCE (54); LOEFFLER - SCIENCE AND ARTS (48); KORBER - LABOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS (47); NEUBAUER - INTERIOR (46); PAETZOLD - HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT (46); LIEHR - TRANSPORT AND UTILITIES (45); RISTOCK - BUILDING AND HOUSING (45); AND LAST OF ALL REICHEL - FAMILY, YOUTH AND SPORT (40). (FRAU REICHEL WAS ALSO ONLY ONE OF HOLDOVER SENATORS WHO FAILED TO OBTAIN SEAT IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.)

5. FDP CAUCUS AND LAND COMMITTEE APPROVED
COALITION WITH SPD BY 49-19 VOTE, BUT NOT WITHOUT
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CONTROVERSY. YOUNG DEMOCRATS ORGANIZATION IN BERLIN CONDEMNED TERMS ON WHICH COALITION AGREEMENT WAS OBTAINED AND DEMANDED THAT NEGOTIATIONS WITH SPD BE RESUMED. LUEDER REJECTED THIS PROPOSAL AND REMINDED JUDOS THAT FDP HAD ONLY 7.2 PERCENT OF VOTE. HE ADDED THAT IF YOUNG DEMOCRATIC TACTICS WERE ADOPTED, FDP WOULD NEVER ATTAIN MAJORITY IN BERLIN. SUCCESSOR TO HERMANN OXFORD AS FDP CAUCUS CHAIRMAN, WALTER RASCH, TOLD MISSION'S LIAISON

OFFICER THAT THERE WERE NO WINNERS OR LOSERS IN SPD-FDP
EFFORTS HAMMER OUT COMMON PROGRAM.

6. MANY RATHAUS OFFICIALS HAVE LOW OPINION OF NEW
SENAT WHICH THEY CONSIDER WAS BORN OF EXPEDIENCY. THEY
PREDICT THERE WILL BE CHANGES MADE, ALTHOUGH THEY ALSO
BELIEVE COALITION BETWEEN SPD AND FDP WILL LAST FOUR YEARS.

7. WITH RESPECT TO LUEDER, WE SHARE OPINION OF ONE RATHAUS
OFFICIAL WHO BELIEVES HE WILL DEFER TO CHAMBER OF INDUSTRY
AND COMMERCE IN MAKING KEY DECISIONS. KORBER, WHO
REPORTEDLY WAS FORCED TO TAKE LABOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS,
STARTS OUT UNDER CLOUD BECAUSE SCHUETZ DID NOT HAVE TIME
TO CONSULT DGB. LIEHR LEARNED FROM JOURNALISTS HE HAD
BEEN GIVEN NEWLY-CREATED TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT. FDP'S
EMIG, SHUNTED TO SCHOOLS BECAUSE OF HIS LACK OF QUALIFICATIONS
FOR ECONOMICS, KNOWS EVEN LESS ABOUT EDUCATION AS
CRITICS HAVE POINTED OUT.

8. IF METHOD OF CREATING COALITION WAS TYPICAL OF
SMOKE-FILLED ROOM EXERCISE, RESULT IS PROBABLY
NOT AS BAD AS CRITICS BELIEVE. TO BE SURE, NEW SENAT HAS
MOVED TO LEFT FROM ITS PREDECESSOR (INCLUSION OF FDP
ALONE HAD SUCH EFFECT) BUT NOT TO POINT WHERE ANY RADICAL
POLICY SHIFTS CAN BE EXPECTED. AS REFTTEL,
MANY OF BEST SPD ADMINISTRATORS REMAIN AND OXFORT WILL BE
PLUS FACTOR BOTH IN SENAT AND IN KEEPING YOUTHFUL FDP
ENTHUSIASTS UNDER CONTROL. GEORGE

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